

**CHAPTER 31 OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY: RAILROAD CLEARANCES**

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**3100 GENERAL PROVISIONS**

- 3100.1 The provisions of this chapter prescribe reasonable requirements governing the clearances above, beside, and between railroad tracks in the District of Columbia that are intended to prevent accidents and injuries to employees, and to reduce the human suffering and economic loss that result from injuries.
- 3100.2 In all construction or reconstruction of railroad tracks or structures adjacent to railroad tracks, and on all railroads over which freight cars are operated or proposed to be operated, the minimum clearances authorized in this chapter shall be provided.
- 3100.3 A railroad company shall not operate freight cars, locomotives, or other freight rolling equipment over tracks constructed after September 1, 1958, or over tracks adjacent to buildings constructed or reconstructed after September 1, 1958, if the clearances are less than those prescribed in this chapter.

**AUTHORITY:** Unless otherwise noted, the authority for this chapter is the D.C. Minimum Wage Act approved September 19, 1918, 40 Stat. 960, D.C. Code §§36-401 through 36-422; as amended by An Act approved October 14, 1941, Title II entitled 'Industrial Safety,' 55 Stat. 738, D.C. Code §§36-431 through 36-442; paragraphs 283 and 284 of §402 of Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1967; and Reorganization Order No. 36, C.O. 302, 853/14, June 16, 1953, as amended.

**SOURCE:** Sections 11-2601 and 11-2602, effective September 1, 1958, ch. 26, 5 DCR 28 (August 11, 1958); 11B DCRR.

**3101 VARIANCES**

- 3101.1 When the overhead or side clearance between a track and any building, structure, or facility is less than the minimum prescribed in this chapter, but was lawfully created prior to September 1, 1958, the minimum clearance prescribed in this chapter shall be provided whenever the building, structure, or facility is relocated or reconstructed, except as provided in this section.

- 3101.2 The Minimum Wage and Industrial Safety Board may consider specific requests for the future continuance of clearances existing prior to these regulations at a reconstructed building, structure, or facility, upon application made as required by the provisions of this section.
- 3101.3 If restricted clearances are necessary, nothing in this chapter shall be construed as preventing the movement of material over tracks when the material is necessary in the construction or maintenance of the tracks, nor in the movement of special work equipment used in the construction, maintenance, or operation of the railroad; Provided, that the movements shall be carried on under the conditions as are necessary to provide for the safety of all concerned.
- 3101.4 The provisions of this chapter shall not be applicable during periods of actual emergency due to wrecks, derailments, washouts, and like conditions; Provided, that reasonable safety precautions are observed.
- 3101.5 If, in any particular case, variation from any of the requirements of this chapter is deemed necessary by an employer, the Board shall consider the application of that employer for a variation when accompanied by a full statement of the conditions existing and the reason why the variation is requested.
- 3101.6 Any variation granted under this section shall be limited to the particular case covered by the application.

SOURCE: Section 11-2603, effective September 1, 1958, ch. 26, 5 DCR 28 (August 11, 1958); 11B DCRR.

## **3102 OVERHEAD CLEARANCES**

- 3102.1 Overhead clearances shall be not less than twenty-two feet (22 ft.).
- 3102.2 Overhead clearances at the entrance to or inside of buildings shall be not less than eighteen feet (18 ft.).
- 3102.3 If the overhead clearance at an entrance to or inside of a building is less than twenty-two feet (22 ft.), a warning sign shall be erected at a suitable location at each point where the tracks enter the building.
- 3102.4 The overhead warning sign required by §3102.3 shall be located in a way that directs the trainmen's attention to the reduced clearance.
- 3102.5 Overhead and side clearances prescribed in this section may be decreased to the extent of a line extending diagonally downward from a point four feet (4 ft.) from the center line of the track twenty-two feet (22 ft.) above the top of the rail to a point eight feet by six inches (8 ft. x 6 in.) from the center line of the track, and the distance of fifteen feet by three inches (15 ft. x 3 in.) above the top of the rail.
- 3102.6 For tracks located at the entrance to or inside of buildings with an eighteen foot (18 ft.) overhead and an eight foot (8 ft.) side clearance, the overhead and side clearances may be decreased to the extent of a line extending diagonally downward from a point four feet (4 ft.) from the center line of the track eighteen



feet (18 ft.) above the top of the rail, to a point eight feet (8 ft.) from the center line of the track at fourteen feet (14 ft.) above the top of the rail.

- 3102.7 The clearances provided in this section shall not apply to the electric wires and equipment required over any for the operation of trains by electric energy; Provided, that the carriers promulgate and enforce rules that prohibit any employee from being on the top of cars while they are being operated under lower clearances as provided in this section.
- 3102.8 Canopies at one (1) side track at a freight platform may be constructed at not less than four feet (4 ft.) from the center line of the track; Provided, that the height of the canopies is a least seventeen feet by six inches (17 ft. x 6 in.) above the top of the rail, and that a full clearance of eight feet by six inches (8 ft. x 6 in.) is maintained on the opposite side of the track from the canopy, or that the center of the track to the adjacent track is not less than fourteen feet (14 ft.).
- 3102.9 In the Washington Terminal Union Station, shelters that are over platforms used principally for passenger car operation may be constructed at not less than four feet by six inches (4 ft. x 6 in.) from the center line of the track; Provided, that the height is not less than fifteen feet (15 ft.) above the top of the rail and that the railroads promulgate and enforce rules prohibiting employees from riding on the outside of equipment when they are standing above the car floor height.

SOURCE: Section 11-2605, effective September 1, 1958, ch. 26, 5 DCR 28 (August 11, 1958); 11B DCRR.

### **3103 SIDE CLEARANCES**

- 3103.1 The minimum side clearances from the center of tangent standard gauge railroad tracks that are used or proposed to be used for operating freight cars shall be as prescribed in this section, except as otherwise prescribed in this chapter.
- 3103.2 On all structures and obstructions above the top of a rail, except those specifically mentioned, the side clearances shall be not less than eight feet by six inches (8 ft. x 6 in.).
- 3103.3 To further reduce occupational hazards, posts, pipes, warning signs, and similar obstructions shall have a side clearance of ten feet (10 ft.), where practicable.
- 3103.4 Platforms that are eight inches (8 in.) or less above the top of a rail shall have a side clearance of not less than four feet by eight inches (4 ft. x 8 in.).
- 3103.5 Platforms that are more than eight inches (8 in.), but not more than four feet (4 ft.) above the top of the rail, may have a side clearance of not less than five feet by seven inches (5 ft. x 7 in.); Provided, that where these platforms are used for loading or unloading freight cars, a side clearance of not less than eight feet by six inches (8 ft. x 6 in.) is maintained on the opposite side of the track to any fixed structure or that the track center to an adjacent track is not less than fourteen feet (14 ft.).
- 3103.6 Where side clearances are less than eight feet by six inches (8 ft. x 6 in.), as authorized by this rule, warning signs directing attention to the reduced

clearances shall be erected at suitable locations, except where the platform is used principally in loading and unloading passenger cars.

- 3103.7 Platforms previously constructed with clearances less than are prescribed in this chapter may be extended with lesser clearances, unless the extension is connected to the reconstruction of the original platform.
- 3103.8 Through bridges supporting tracks, tunnels, water columns, and oil columns shall be not less than eight feet (8 ft.) from the center line of the track.
- 3103.9 Clearances for through bridges supporting tracks, water barrel platforms and refuge platforms on bridges and trestles not provided with walkways, hand rails, water barrels, water columns, oil columns, block signals, when all or portions thereof are four feet (4 ft.) or less above the top of the rail may be decreased to the extent defined by a line extending diagonally upward from a point level with the top of the rail and five foot (5 ft.) lateral distance from the center line of the track to a point four feet (4 ft.) above the top of the rail and an eight foot (8 ft.) lateral distance from the center line of the track; Provided, that the minimum clearance for hand rails and water barrels on bridges with walkways shall be seven feet by nine inches (7 ft. x 9 in.).
- 3103.10 Switch boxes, switch-operating mechanisms, and accessories necessary for the control and operation of signals, and interlockers projecting four inches (4 in.) or less above the top of a rail, shall have a side clearance of not less than three feet (3 ft.).
- 3103.11 The center spindle of signal and switch stands three feet (3 ft.) or less above the top of the rail, and located between tracks where not practical to provide clearance otherwise prescribed in this chapter, shall be not less than six feet (6 ft.) from the center line of the track.
- 3103.12 Side clearances, on sidings only, at entrances to and inside warehouses and industrial buildings shall be not less than eight feet (8 ft.) from the center line of the track; Provided, that this rule shall not supersede or affect the clearances in §3103.3.
- 3103.13 All minimum side clearances prescribed in this section are for tangent tracks. Structures adjacent to curve tracks shall have an additional minimum side clearance compensating for the curvature.

SOURCE: Section 11-2606, effective September 1, 1958, ch. 26, 5 DCR 28 (August 11, 1958); 11B DCRR.

### **3104 CLEARANCE BETWEEN TRACKS**

- 3104.1 The minimum distance between center lines of parallel main tracks shall be not less than fourteen feet (14 ft.).
- 3104.2 In yards, except as prescribed in this section, track centers between parallel tracks shall be not less than fourteen feet (14 ft.).



- 3104.3 In congested yard areas where it is not practical to provide fourteen foot (14 ft.) centers between parallel tracks, thirteen feet by six inch (13 ft. x 6 in.) centers between parallel yard tracks shall be permissible.
- 3104.4 The center line of any standard gauge track, except a main track or a passing track, parallel and adjacent to a main track or a passing track, shall be at least fifteen feet (15 ft.) from the center line of the main track or passing track; Provided, that where a passing track is adjacent to and on at least fifteen foot (15 ft.) track centers with the main track, any other track may be constructed adjacent to the passing track with the clearance prescribed by federal standards.
- 3104.5 Clearance between center lines of parallel team, house, or industrial tracks shall be not less than thirteen feet (13 ft.), except as provided by federal standards.
- 3104.6 Center lines of any ladder track with hand-operated switches constructed parallel to any other adjacent track shall have a clearance of not less than eighteen feet (18 ft.) from the center line of the other track, except that parallel ladder tracks with hand-operated switches shall have a clearance between center lines of ladders of not less than nineteen feet (19 ft.).

SOURCE: Section 11-2607, effective September 1, 1958, ch. 26, 5 DCR 28 (August 11, 1958); 11B DCRR.

### **3105 OTHER OBSTRUCTIONS AND CONDITIONS ADJACENT TO TRACKS**

- 3105.1 The clearances prescribed in this chapter shall not apply to engine houses or engine house facilities.
- 3105.2 The space between tracks ordinarily used by train and yardmen and other employees as a walkway in the discharge of their duties, and the space beside the tracks within eight feet by six inches (8 ft. x 6 in.) of the center lines of the tracks shall be kept in a reasonably suitable condition for this purpose.
- 3105.3 No merchandise, materials, equipment, or other articles shall be placed or permitted to remain either on the ground or on the platforms adjacent to any track at a distance less than eight feet by six inches (8 ft. x 6 in.) from the center line of the track; Provided, that this rule shall not apply to materials to be used within a reasonable time in the construction, maintenance, or repair of tracks.
- 3105.4 A white or yellow painted line or other approved type of marker shall be maintained at a distance of not less than eight feet by six inches (8 ft. x 6 in.) from the center line of the track on all platforms, excluding passenger platforms, to indicate the space along the edge of the platform that must be kept clear of merchandise, materials, equipment, or other articles.
- 3105.5 The provisions of §§3105.3 and 3105.4 shall not apply to platforms used principally in connection with the operation of passenger train equipment on the Washington Terminal Company property and in the Eckington Coach Yard.
- 3105.6 On industrial tracks, the responsibility for compliance with §§3105.3 and 3105.4 shall rest with the person or persons having control or custody of the warehouse, factory, or other facility served by the affected track.

SOURCE: Section 11-2608, effective September 1, 1958, ch. 26, 5 DCR 28 (August 11, 1958); 11B DCRR.

### 3199 DEFINITIONS

3199.1 When used in this chapter, the following terms and phrases shall have the meanings ascribed:

**Approved** - approved by the Minimum Wage and Industrial Safety Board.

**Board** - the D.C. Minimum Wage and Industrial Safety Board.

**Clearance between tracks** - the shortest distance between the center lines of adjacent tracks.

**Height of a freight car** - the distance between the top of the rail and the top of the running board.

**Overhead clearance** - the vertical distance from the level of the top of the highest rail to a structure or obstruction above that level.

**Side clearance** - the shortest distance from the center line of the track to a structure or obstruction at the side of the track.

**Width of a freight car** - twice the distance from the center line of the car to the extreme outside part of the car.

SOURCE: Section 11-2604, effective September 1, 1958, ch. 26, 5 DCR 28 (August 11, 1958); 11B DCRR.